



2011

## Western and YOU Parent/Family Academy

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### WMU ScholarWorks Citation

Glaser, Shari, "Western and YOU Parent/Family Academy" (2011). *Academic Leadership Academy*. 6.  
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# Western and YOU Parent/Family Academy



## Transitioning to College

Parents and family members are increasingly engaged with and connected to their child's scholastic life during the K-12 years. For many families, this leads to a challenging situation during the transition from parenting a high school student to parenting a college student.

The **Western and YOU Parent/Family Academy** is a newly created interactive classroom experience that took place during the 2011 Orientation program. It provided an opportunity for family members to experience (or re-experience) the classroom environment.

The course offered a hands-on approach in educating our families to better understand and assist students through the transition of attending college. It was designed to comprehensively bring together information presented throughout the orientation program into a usable and understandable format.

## Western and YOU Invitation



Learn everything you need to know about WMU and how you can actively support your new WMU student through the transition from high school to college. This interactive academy includes a course structure that simulates the typical WMU classroom. Experiencing a college classroom offers you the unique opportunity to better understand the rewards and challenges of your student's academic life beginning in the fall.

As we progress through the "chapters" of new student transition beginning with summer preparation and into the fall semester, you will acquire valuable information about many areas of the University, including Parent and Family Programs, Public Safety, Emergency Management, Sincuse Health Center, The Registrar's Office, The WMU Bookstore, Financial Aid, and PNC.

This is a "can't miss" part of the parent/family orientation program and we look forward to seeing you in class!



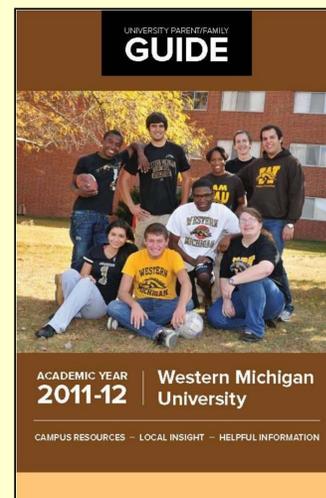
## Course Objectives

- Deliver important transitional and resource information through an actual classroom experience.
- Offer an informative overview of college life on WMU's campus.
- Become familiar with what to expect over the summer months and fall semester so that your student (and you) have a seamless transition into WMU.
- Return home after orientation with a solid understanding of WMU's role and your continuing role in the success of your student.



## Course Content and "Textbook"

- Chapter 1: Transitioning
- Chapter 2: Finding Balance
- Chapter 3: Making the Grade
- Chapter 4: Staying Connected
- Chapter 5: Looking Ahead
- Chapter 6: Resources



## Course Outline

The *Academy* was co-taught by Shari Glaser, director of Parent and Family Programs and Penny Bundy, director of Admissions.

Participants were seated at round tables to encourage interaction and comfort.

Each participant received a course syllabus, a 2011-12 Parent/Family Guide that served as the textbook for the course, and an I-Clicker for interactive question responses.

The *Academy* took place at the conclusion of the formal orientation presentations and was intended to weave all presented information into the context of student and family transition.

I-clicker questions were designed to encourage family members to consider transitional topics and both parent and student reactions to various situations.

## Attendee Feedback

**90.4% of attendees rated the Western and You Academy as "excellent" or "above average" in their orientation evaluation.**

*"It's things you should know, but I had never thought about a lot of them. ...how is it going to be for him, the transition part of it and...what it's going to mean to us. It helped me a lot because it was things I just hadn't thought of."*

*Father's comment after the Western and You Academy*

*"I am not alone in how I feel. We are all worried about our kids adjusting and making the right decisions. Also there are great ways for me to continue to interact with him about his academics and financial position with GoWMU and through the tips provided at orientation."*

*Mother's comment after the Western and You Academy*

## Lessons Learned and Observations

Attendees enjoyed using the I-Clickers and seeing the immediate responses helped many attendees realize that they were not alone in their feelings about the transitional experience.

I-Clicker questions must be carefully designed for understanding.

The *Academy* must be designed to move quickly through the relevant content, constantly engaging the attendees' attention.

Sufficient time must be included for questions and also include a stretch break halfway through the class.

## Academy Response Analysis

Nineteen questions and I-Clicker responses were woven into the course content; eight of which specifically addressed family/student relationships within the context of transition. The remaining questions assessed understanding of the information delivered during the Academy.

Over half of the attendees (54.8%) had either a first or only student starting college

61.8% of the attendees hold a college degree of some sort.

An emerging theme was concern about time management and the student's ability to set priorities.

From the parental perspective, another theme was anxiety about separating from and missing the student.

Parents and family members responded that they would be understanding and supportive (54.3%) in challenging times, reminding their student of support services.

Even if the first semester or year didn't go as planned, the parental reaction was "it depends on the situation" (41.4%) or "understanding/acceptance" of the situation (31.8%).



## Contact Information

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